

U.S. Department of Education
2011 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School

School Type (Public Schools):
(Check all that apply, if any)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charter	Title 1	Magnet	Choice

Name of Principal: Mrs. Melody Wirgau

Official School Name: Gaston Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 610 McKinley Ave
Beloit, WI 53511-5938

County: Rock State School Code Number: 04130110

Telephone: (608) 361-2310 E-mail: mkwirgau@sdb.k12.wi.us

Fax: (608) 361-2320 Web URL: www.sdb.k12.wi.us/gaston/

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Mr. Milton Thompson Superintendent e-mail: mthompson@sdb.k12.wi.us

District Name: Beloit District Phone: (608) 361-4000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Michael Ramsdail

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

11WI8

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2010-2011 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2005.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

11WI8

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 12 Elementary schools
(per district designation) 2 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
15 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 9788

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Urban or large central city
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	19	10	29		6	0	0	0
K	30	27	57		7	0	0	0
1	28	35	63		8	0	0	0
2	34	29	63		9	0	0	0
3	28	37	65		10	0	0	0
4	18	28	46		11	0	0	0
5	29	41	70		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								393

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
20 % Black or African American
28 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
51 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2009-2010 school year: 6%
 This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	12
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	13
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	25
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	395
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.06
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	6

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 10%
 Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 40
 Number of languages represented, not including English: 1
 Specify languages:

Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 76%

Total number of students who qualify: 308

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 20%

Total number of students served: 81

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>9</u> Autism	<u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>9</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>47</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>23</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>5</u>	<u>14</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
Support staff	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Total number	<u>37</u>	<u>18</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 17:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only high schools need to supply graduation rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any student or teacher attendance rates under 95% and teacher turnover rates over 12% and fluctuations in graduation rates.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	96%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	96%	93%	91%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	19%	7%	3%	3%	3%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

For the school years 2007-2008 and 2006-2007, there were three staff members each year that took family leave during the year. These staff members used sick days as part of their family leave.

For the school year 2009-2010, we had nine changes in our teaching staff. Of these nine, only two were new hires replacing individuals that had left the school district. The remaining seven were existing school district employees who were transferred to our building from another location.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Graduating class size:	<u>0</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>0%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
Total	<u>0%</u>

A typical neighborhood school, Gaston Elementary School, is located in the southwest corner of the city in a mainly blue collar residential neighborhood. It is one of 12 neighborhood elementary schools in the School District of Beloit. The original school was built in 1901. A wing of four classrooms was added to the building in 1955. The school was closed during the 1976-1977 school year while the original structure was removed and the current building was constructed.

For many years Gaston Elementary served as a K-6 school. In a district-wide reconfiguration the sixth grade classes were moved out of the elementary building in 1996. For over 10 years Gaston remained a K-5 elementary school until the School District of Beloit initiated a 4 year old kindergarten program. The Gaston students enrolled in this program were originally housed at a nearby alternate site for the first two years of this program. Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year this program has been housed within our building.

Approximately 10 years ago one of the major corporations in Beloit closed its doors which caused many of the families not only in our neighborhood but across the city to join the unemployment ranks. The Beloit Corporation was one of the major industries in Beloit. The impact of its closing has brought about significant changes in the increased poverty levels across the city. We have seen a significant change in the student population of our school within the past ten years. Our building has seen a steady increase in the total number of students enrolled. In 2001 Gaston's enrollment was at 300. Ten years later, the current population is 419. With this increase of number of students we have also seen a change in the socioeconomic makeup of our population. During the 1998 – 1999 school year Gaston first qualified as a Title I school with 50% of its student population receiving free/reduced lunch. That number has steadily increased over the years and the current percentage of students qualifying during the 2010-2011 school year is over 75%. Another change in our population is evidenced by the ethnicity of our students. During the 2000-2001 school year, our population was 81% Caucasian, 10% Black – Non Hispanic, and 8% Hispanic. For the 2010 – 2011 school year our population includes 51% Caucasian, 21% Black – Non Hispanic, and 28% Hispanic. One thing that has remained constant at Gaston is the ongoing dedication and support of the Gaston teachers and a very involved PTA. Many of our parents are involved in activities throughout the year whether it is through volunteering or fundraising.

Over the past 8 years the staff have been involved in various in-service opportunities to explore alternate practices and reaffirm their strategies for teaching a diverse group of students. We have studied the cultural impact that poverty has on our students and the extended learning opportunities that we must provide in order for them to be successful learners. We have had many critical conversations about the expectations for all our students and ways that we might have to change to meet their needs. It is a philosophical change that is always in the evolving process.

Within the past 10 years Gaston School has participated in multiple data retreats and various trainings to understand the usage of data to guide our instruction and to monitor the progress of students. As a building we set math and reading goals to meet the No Child Left Behind standards. The Leadership Team set benchmarks for each grade level and backwards mapped the curriculum to set a pace for staff and students to meet the benchmarks throughout the year. We began to use the 4 DuFour questions as our framework for planning: What do they know? How do we know they know? What are we going to do if they do not know? What are we going to do if they already know? By using these questions we began to flexibly group students between grade levels and across grade levels if needed to meet the individual needs of the students. Students were provided intensive interventions or enrichments as needed to address their academic needs.

During the 2008-09 school year Gaston Elementary was offered the opportunity to apply for the REACH (Responsive Education for All Children) grant. REACH is a statewide school improvement initiative funded through a U.S. IDEA grant. Gaston was fortunate to be the recipient of one of the grants based upon the current data of the school and the ongoing building of collaborative skills. REACH has been instrumental in helping us to attain many of our building goals through their data driven intervention model and ongoing trainings.

1. Assessment Results:

Annually, students in Wisconsin are administered standardized assessments to measure academic achievement and growth. Students participate in the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS), which includes the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) and the Wisconsin Alternative Assessment (WAA). The data is used to compare and evaluate the achievement of students in third, fourth, and fifth grade. Students in third and fifth grade are assessed in reading and mathematics, while students in fourth grade are assessed in reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies. Students with proficient or advanced proficient scores are considered to meet the academic standards. The WKCE Reading and Mathematics subtests are composed of selected response (multiple choice) items and constructed response (short answer) items at all grade levels. The WKCE Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies subtests included only selected response items. The state uses the following definitions for performance levels: Advanced Proficient – Demonstrates in-depth understanding of academic knowledge and skills, Proficient – Demonstrates competency in the academic knowledge and skills, Basic – Demonstrates some academic knowledge and skills, and Minimal – Demonstrates very limited academic knowledge and skills.

Gaston Elementary School has performed well on the WKCE in the previous years, due to early intervention, vertical curriculum alignment, and teachers working collaboratively to meet the needs of our students. We have seen a steady increase in our test scores in the past five years. The Education Act of 2002 requires all schools to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP). Last year, in 2009-10, Wisconsin's Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) were set at 74% proficiency in reading and 58% proficiency in mathematics. Also, student subgroups (based on ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability status, and English proficiency) with 40 or more students were required to meet the AMOs. All of the students at Gaston scored well above the AMOs and the subgroups outperformed many of their peers comparatively across the district and state.

Longitudinally, students have shown continual progress on the WKCE. Students in 2007-2008 in third grade scored 89% proficient in their reading and 86% in math and now in fifth grade they are performing at 91% in reading and 87% in math. We have seen growth within the subgroups. In 2007-08 our students qualifying for free/reduced lunch performed at 82% in math and 86% in reading. These students performed at 83% in math and 87% in reading in 2009-10. Our largest sub-group growth occurred with our students with disabilities. This group scored 57% in math and reading in 2007-08 as compared to 77% in math and 85% in reading in 2009-10. In 2009-10 we had some of Gaston's highest test scores since the implementation of the WKCE. In math we scored at 86% in third grade, 94% in fourth grade, and 87% in fifth grade. In reading we scored 97% in third grade, 92% in fourth grade, and 91% in fifth grade. We attribute this growth to the ongoing monitoring of data and continual progress monitoring. We quarterly determine where students are performing and we develop our intervention groups, discuss differentiated strategies to be utilized and flexibly group students to meet their academic needs. The item analysis of the WKCE and MAP data gives us an ongoing tool to assure student success.

The use of the MAP test (Measures of Academic Progress) from Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) was instituted in our district in the spring of 2008. All students in grades kindergarten through fifth are assessed in the areas of reading and math. First through fifth grade are tested in the fall, winter, and spring of each year while kindergarten students are tested in winter and spring. The test results are given in a RIT (Rasch Unit) score which can then be correlated to grade level proficiency as a combined score for each subject area or for a specific content strand for each subject.

By using the Dynamic Reports provided by NWEA we are able to measure the growth of our student population over a two year span. The results are reported in the percentage of our population of students

who have met the proficiencies at their grade level. In Reading, students in third grade for the school year 2008-09 scored 52% and in 2009-10 third grade students scored 76% which was +24 points for third grade norms. In fourth grade in reading for the school year 2008-09 students scored 66% and fourth graders for the following year scored 68%. This was a 2 point increase. Students in fifth grade for the school year 2008-09 in reading scored 61% and in 2009 -10 they scored 73% which was a 12 point increase. The average increase for third through fifth grade was plus 13 points. The same trend continued in math. Students in third grade for 2008-09 scored 61% in math and the following year 62% in math. Fourth grade students scored 46% in 2008-09 and in 2009-10 fourth grade scored 66% which was a 20 point increase. Fifth grade scored 56% in 2008-09 and 75% in 2009-10. There was a 19 point increase. The average growth for third and fourth grades through fifth grade students in which math was plus 13 points. The longitudinal results of this data show an increasing number of students who are meeting the proficiencies at their grade level. MAP provides us ongoing data to continue to progress monitor students effectively.

The results of these assessments are analyzed by staff individually as well as in grade level groups. This data along with classroom assessments, WKCE results, benchmark assessments and anecdotal records are used to determine the educational needs of each individual student. This ongoing analysis of data is used to determine students' placement in guided reading groups, reading intervention programs such as SOAR to Success and Leveled Literacy Intervention, math intervention groups as well as placement in our district's gifted and talented program.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The analysis of data is not only school-wide, but also at each grade level and for individual students. This is an ongoing process. To program for our students we triangulate the data from the state WKCE assessment, the MAP quarterly tests, and the district common assessments and benchmarks. We feel that it is imperative to look at the whole child and to make programming decisions based upon individual student's needs. The usage of data guides our discussion for curriculum, instructional best practices, scheduling, interventions, and flexibly grouping for our students to assure each student receives their instruction based upon their instructional needs and talents.

Through the usage of monthly grade level Professional Learning Communities, the building leadership team, and the principal the data is broken down to search for achievement gaps and patterns that will help us change our instructional practices to meet the students' needs. Each grade level at Gaston has a portable data wall that contains current data for reading and math. This tool is used as a visual to monitor the students' growth. Through the ongoing discussions and visual reminders, staff are accountable to meet the needs of their students and the grade level partners work together to program for all students.

Structurally, the Site Level Team makes decisions on what programming and resources will be used to better instruct the students at Gaston. All staff members are asked to participate on at least one action plan attached to the site level plan which helps everyone to be included in the decision making progress.

Students are monitored weekly through a Student Intervention Team (SIT) team process. Teachers bring students to SIT team when their data shows that the students are not making adequate progress or when the students need additional differentiation activities to enrich their skills. The SIT team is a problem solving team that helps staff members analyze their data and provide intervention strategies for both lower performing students and higher performing students. The SIT team examines the results of current assessments and any areas of concern that might impact a student's growth such as attendance, behavior, and disabilities.

Within the multiple frameworks to monitor a student's progress we are able to be accountable to all students' needs. Data analysis is common practice for planning and structuring our day at Gaston.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Gaston Elementary is one of twelve elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school comprising the School District of Beloit. Student progress on the standardized test is reported to the school community on the school performance report card. All WKCE results are made available to the public in the spring following the testing in the fall. This complies with school board policy. Specific results are shared with the school board and ad hoc committees throughout the district. Test results in the report are broken down nationally, statewide, and locally for third, fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth, and tenth grade. All WKCE results for the School District of Beloit can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website WINSS: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sig/index.html>. This information is shared with parents via the monthly newsletter and parent call out system.

Each student that participates in the WKCE receives an individual report denoting their achievement. This report is either mailed to the household of the students or delivered in person at the schools. As the school principal, I share building results with parents at PTA meetings and forums. Gaston has been recognized for four years as a Wisconsin School of Promise school which allows us the opportunity to celebrate our successes at parent nights and through local and state newspaper publications.

Results of other school based assessments that are administered more often are shared with parents on a frequent basis both formally and informally. Parents participate in two formal parent teacher conferences each school year and parents receive quarterly progress reports to share students' grades and proficiencies. At fall parent teacher conferences parents receive a copy of the MAP test for their child. By using this gauge of measurement parents are able to see how their child performs as compared to other students nationally at their grade level. During these conferences parents receive an understanding of the expectations for their child and any assistance and modifications that may help their child be successful. MAP winter testing and other common assessments are also shared with parents at mid-winter conferences. This helps to keep parents informed of their child's progress and to elicit their help with any additional strategies that might be necessary to help enrich or modify their child's instruction. MAP testing is performed again in the spring of year and these results are shared with parents in the end of the year progress reports for parents to understand their child's growth for the school year as well as the projected growth for each individual student.

At yearend data retreat staff organize all data points from the previous year to plan for groupings and educational strategies for the fall. These results are also shared with summer school staff to allow for ongoing programming options for students that attend summer school and to allow for the next grade level teacher to understand how to best meet the child's needs. If data is our best way to plan for our students then we need to fully communicate our progress and successes on a routine basis.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Each staff member at Gaston is proud of the successes we have made. We are more than willing to share our strategies with other schools in and outside of our district. We continually strive to improve our programming for students and to build upon our accomplishments in order to provide the best learning environment for all of our students. Our goal is to continually evolve using best practice strategies and frameworks to offer research-based programming for our students.

For many years Gaston has had the reputation of being a progressive staff. As a team we work together to communicate strategies and programming ideas that we find successful and through district Professional Learning Communities we are able to share our strategies and successes with other grade level teams and to build upon the successes of other colleagues at each grade level in the district.

Gaston not only works to assure academic successes of students but also to teach positive behavior expectations to students. We are one of the elementary schools that have used Positive Behavior Intervention System as a framework to teach positive behaviors and character traits. We developed a TAG (Together we Achieve at Gaston) incentive program for our students using dog tags and "bandit

bucks". We have monitored our students' progress and shared ideas and activities with our colleagues across the district. We feel this has been one of the valuable components of our successes. We want to assure positive behaviors and the desire to learn for all our students.

Staff members at Gaston are asked to share their programming strategies at district and state level workshops. Most recently we shared our success at the REACH conference presented by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Through the REACH grant project we have developed flyers and informational boards to share our accomplishments not only within the district but also to other districts. We are involved in the state Advanced Placement Initiative grant which allows us to work on vertical teams planning K-12 advanced placement curriculums and to collaborate with peers across the state about our successes and desires for continued improvement.

Ongoing news of our successes are shared at board meetings, public forums, monthly newsletters, and submissions to the city daily news. Our website is updated periodically to showcase our successes and to encourage our ongoing improvements. Gaston's successes continue to be the hard work of its staff members and students.

1. Curriculum:

Gaston Elementary School is a 4K – 5 school and classrooms are fully inclusive with multiple co-teaching opportunities occurring throughout the building. Gaston Elementary School receives Title 1 funding and SAGE funding which allows for a 1:18 classroom or a 2:30 classroom in K-3. We have multiple structures which provide choices for parents. Students may be placed in a co-taught classroom with two teachers or a smaller classroom with one teacher. The students are flexibly grouped throughout the day between grade level teams. All teachers are assessed based upon their ability to teach within the framework of the district core curriculum and pacing. Each core subject has benchmarks and “I can” statements that clearly define the intent of the curriculum. The “I can” statements are available for all staff, students, and parents. The curriculum benchmarks and assessments are web based which allows for the ongoing development of teachers’ skills and ideas.

The core curriculum is supported by various curriculum resources that are universal to all students not only at Gaston but to all elementary students within the district. Through the development of building Professional Learning Communities and district grade level Professional Learning Communities staff development is a vital tool to enhance the universal curriculum for all students. Teachers are allowed to differentiate their strategies and resources to meet the needs of their students within the framework of the desired curriculum standards. There is vertical alignment within the grade level teams at Gaston to assure continuous growth for all our students.

With the ongoing development of our building Professional Learning Communities we have defined our grade level expectations and perfected our skills on the pedagogical methods that will optimize everyone’s instructional practices. Educators at Gaston use a Balanced Literacy Approach to teach their reading and writing instruction. Every student is provided the opportunity for independent reading, read-alouds, shared reading and writing, and guided reading through flexible grouping at their level on a daily basis. Using ongoing assessments, students not only are afforded a daily literacy block but also a daily literacy intervention block that is specifically designed to provide structured interventions or enrichments for students. Teachers are expected to teach students how to engage with their reading strategies and to apply them in all reading environments. Students are taught multiple strategies to read any unknown word that includes the usage of phonemic awareness and phonics. All students’ abilities are progress monitored individually to better design the instruction for each child. Teachers are allowed to differentiate their lessons so that each student has the appropriate learning opportunity at their level. Teachers work collaboratively to support the instruction of all students at Gaston.

The mathematics instruction at Gaston is based upon a conceptual curriculum that allows students not only the opportunity to develop their fundamental math skills, but also the process and critical thinking skills needed to become excellent math students. Students are offered additional math instruction using supplemental materials that allows for individual growth plans dependent upon a student’s needs. Teachers at Gaston have a consistent uninterrupted math block daily where every student receives the universal math curriculum and a separate math intervention block daily that is prescriptive, based upon pre and post testing to meet each child’s needs. During the intervention block there are multiple opportunities for enrichment and remediation as needed.

The social studies and science curriculums are conceptually based with defined units of instruction. Students are taught many of the concepts through inter-disciplinary practices and many of the concepts are project based with guided instruction. Students are expected to be accountable for the essential questions for each unit and they are taught strategies of comparing and contrasting, questioning, hypothesizing, and analyzing information.

The students are also expected to meet specific technology and media standards through the usage of the computer lab and IMC. Students are exposed to a variety of materials through reference materials and technological materials. We also have district defined standards for curriculum in health, physical education, art, music, and guidance. Our upper grade students are offered instrumental and vocal music opportunities within the scheduled school day.

All students are expected to reach their highest potential and the goal is for all students to be proficient at their grade level utilizing the district strategic plan. We plan and offer opportunities for students to develop into admirable, productive citizens. We instill a desire to learn and teach students the importance of collaboration and problem solving skills for the ever changing world.

2. Reading/English:

Gaston School works diligently to provide reading opportunities for students in all areas of the curriculum. Using the Balanced Literacy Approach, students are not only instructed at their level but are offered the opportunity to enjoy reading at their independent level of reading on a daily basis. Each student is offered the opportunity to have their own books at their reading level and they are valued for their reading abilities. Teachers work hard to continually enhance the students' reading materials that will allow students to become fully engaged in their reading and to develop their areas of interest through reading.

Teachers have multiple resources that allow them to provide for the students' reading needs. All staff have a core curriculum that provides opportunities for read-alouds and shared reading. Gaston also has a leveled library that gives teachers a variety of guided reading books that may be used at the students' level of instruction. Through the IMC and classroom libraries students are provided book bins that house both fiction and non-fiction books at each student's independent reading level. Teachers at Gaston utilize several progress monitoring tools on a regular basis to assess students' growth and instructional level.

Gaston has a variety of multi leveled books to be utilized to teach the core social studies and science units at the level of reading ability for each student, which allows teachers the opportunity to teach concepts at varied instructional levels. The district has purchased primary and intermediate intervention materials for reading instruction at each grade level. This allows our teachers the ability to not only teach a strong universal curriculum but also to teach tier two and tier three reading interventions utilizing the prescriptive programs of Soar to Success and Leveled Literacy Intervention. Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments are the benchmark assessments used to determine a student's need for intervention.

Gaston has the advantage of one Reading Specialist and .5 Title 1 teacher and .5 ESL teacher to provide small group direct instruction to students. The Reading Specialist's goal is to provide the most intensive instruction to the most fragile students that are struggling with their reading. The Title 1 and ESL teachers provide small group instruction to address individual needs of struggling readers and ESL students. Currently we utilize the Houghton Mifflin SOAR to Success intervention program to meet the needs of below grade level students. We have 15 classroom teachers in Kindergarten through fifth grade that have received additional training to implement this program. Students that are significantly below grade level with their reading skills are provided with Leveled Literacy Intervention published by Heinemann.

Leveled Literacy Intervention instruction is a tier three RtI intervention that provides intensive instruction to students in groups of one to three.

3. Mathematics:

Gaston School works continually to align and provide best practice math strategies for all the students. The goal for mathematics instruction is to allow all students to become successful mathematicians. Staff work to develop a solid foundation for all their students utilizing the language and basic concepts of math. The math program is concept based which provides a spiraling curriculum that allows students to master concepts at their ability level. Additional structured resources are available to

staff that are very prescriptive and enable teachers to individualize for enrichment and remediation as needed.

The daily instruction of math is highlighted by a minimum 60 minute math block that introduces the conceptual framework for the math unit. Each grade level has a scheduled math block and a scheduled math intervention block. Teachers work collaboratively to regroup as needed to provide for all the students' success. The universal curriculum used at Gaston is Mathematical Investigations. The conceptual framework of Mathematical Investigations is based upon the national mathematics standards. An additional 30-45 minute intervention block for math is scheduled daily for all students. This time can be used for practice of basic skills and reinforcement of concepts that need additional instruction. Teachers use the Mathletics curriculum to identify areas of need for students. Students are grouped for intervention or enrichment according to their math needs using unit pre-test and post-test, and their progress is monitored to assure their ongoing growth.

The math program allows students the opportunity to use manipulatives in a hands on approach to develop their understanding of the process for mathematical problem solving. The math resources allow for a variety of learning styles to be met through technology, visuals, games, and math tools. Students are taught to solve problems in a variety of ways and the activities are designed to engage students in working and communicating with their peers to share their problem solving strategies.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Gaston School fully integrates Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) as its behavior and character teaching tool using strategies from TRIBES Learning Communities and Peer Mediation. All students are taught appropriate behaviors through Cool Tools, Second Step program, and Character Counts instruction. The positive behaviors are identified on a behavior matrix and are taught within the core curriculum. Students receive various incentives to encourage the positive behavior development. The strategic plan for the School District of Beloit states, "We will, in partnership with families and the stateline-community, continue to integrate, model, and reinforce the character traits of fairness, caring, citizenship, responsibility, respect, and trustworthiness as well as develop means of assessing student demonstration of these traits." The staff model and frame their instruction to ensure the mission is met for all students. Gaston's school motto is Together we Achieve at Gaston (TAG). All students are allowed to earn dog tags quarterly for their positive behaviors, strong character traits, attendance, academic progress and academic achievement. We feel it is important for all students to be afforded the opportunity to find success at school.

Gaston's Leadership team collaborates on a regular basis with the entire staff to plan, model, and instruct staff on ways to integrate positive behavior and character instruction throughout their day. The resources are organized to allow staff, students, and parents to utilize them to help build a positive culture at Gaston. The students learn basic routines of positive behavior and the character traits of honesty, respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, and citizenship. Gaston's positive expectations establish a culture that maximizes each student's potential to become an engaged, positive, and productive member of the community.

Students at Gaston are allowed many opportunities to showcase their positive behaviors through the expectations on the playground, lunchroom, classroom, restroom, and hallways. Students are reminded on a daily basis the expectations for their positive behaviors. Through the use of a data wall we are able to monitor student behavior by grade level and areas of the school where disruptive behaviors occur. Staff utilize the data to identify problem areas and provide instruction to remedy these behaviors and create a more positive learning environment. Gaston staff and students created the Gaston Pride Pledge that is recited every morning after the national anthem. The pledge reads:

We've got that Gaston Pride, I am responsible, My attitude is good, I do my best.

My academics ROCK, I give and get respect, That puts Gaston School far above the rest!!!

College is my goal in life, I know I can go, With an attitude of learning, My abilities will grow.

Through collaboration with the local Boys and Girls Club students have the opportunity to participate in the after school program. The program runs for 90 minutes following school each day. During this time students receive a snack, help with their school work, and participate in a character education program. This allows for wrap around care for many of our students.

There are a number of school activities created and supported by Gaston Staff and parents. These activities include a variety of intramural sports programs for grades first through fifth, Destination Imagination, Just Say No, John Doe Club, Anti-Bullying group, Show Choir, Spirit Squad, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Safety Patrol, and Student Council. Students have the opportunity to participate every other year in either a speech contest or learning fair.

5. Instructional Methods:

Student learning and achievement at Gaston Elementary is strongly impacted by the structured curriculum map, scope and sequence and common assessments established by our district wide grade level professional learning communities. The universal curriculum is the primary resource utilized to teach and to strive to meet the learning needs of our diverse student population. Using best practice strategies and the understanding of child development and student mastery teachers differentiate and flexibly group their students based upon their readiness and unique needs. The concepts, skills, and processes are not only taught directly to all students but are integrated across the curriculum to help students apply their knowledge in real world situations.

The Balanced Literacy Approach to reading and writing lends itself to meet the individual needs of students in each classroom through large group, small group, and individual instruction. Every student is instructed at their instructional level and they are challenged to continually progress to become independent at higher levels of reading and writing. Staff use running records and student conferencing to assess each student's skills and process and to plan for their continuous instruction throughout the year. Grade level teams work collaboratively to flexibly group students for their guided reading lessons and interventions if needed. This allows all students to gain the reading strategies necessary to become proficient readers. Independent reading times motivates students to enjoy their reading abilities by reading materials at their level and interest. Teachers utilize a variety of strategies to help students to become independent writers. All students are expected to be able to use their writing skills in all areas of the curriculum.

In math students are encouraged to utilize a variety of strategies to solve their problems. Activities and lessons are designed to help students understand the mathematical processes and to develop their basic skills and algorithms. By using MAP testing as a screener and Mathletics pre-tests students math needs may be individualized for instruction. Progress is monitored throughout the year and intervention groups are formed to meet specific skills and enrichment groups are formed to enrich proficient math students. Students are expected to be able to apply their math concepts and skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Gaston has additional support staff to provide small group instruction and specialized instruction for struggling students. The gifted and talented resource teacher supplements and enriches curriculum for identified students. English Language Learners receive support within their classroom and individual support as needed. Students with specific learning needs receive additional instruction specialized for their needs in areas such as speech and language, emotional/behavioral disorders, or specific learning disabilities. Many co-teaching opportunities are provided throughout the day to meet the variety of needs in the regular classroom.

6. Professional Development:

Staff development is an ongoing and integral part of our school's success. Staff development activities are based upon our building needs and the district's vision and needs. Utilizing building data analysis we design monthly staff development opportunities in a grade level Professional Learning Community approach. Through the sharing of data, strategies, and resources staff have expanded their teaching practices to help support all students' learning. Staff are also offered opportunities to participate in workshops and in-services that are targeted at specific learning needs.

Staff throughout the School District of Beloit are also offered the opportunity for district professional learning communities monthly. The professional learning communities continually revise and align the district curriculum, formulate "I can" statements, and develop common assessments to provide all staff opportunities for understanding the expectations for students not only at Gaston but also throughout the district.

Gaston Elementary has the opportunity to participate in the REACH grant. The grant provided staff multiple opportunities for training in areas such as progress monitoring and resource mapping. Through the support of staff, training in Balanced Literacy, differentiated methods, co-teaching strategies, and intervention models have been studied and designed to allow for the individual needs of the students at Gaston.

To strengthen the student behaviors at Gaston a team of staff members participated in the PBIS training and then coached other staff members to develop their skills in delivering a universal behavior instruction program. The PBIS team monitors behaviors on a quarterly basis and develops lessons and strategies to teach positive behaviors to all students. Ongoing district opportunities are provided to Gaston staff to develop their technology skills and innovative teaching strategies.

Within Gaston's staff development opportunities we have developed a comprehensive schedule that allows for grade level literacy and math blocks and grade level intervention. Currently staff are exploring tier two and tier three intervention strategies for students that have inappropriate behaviors at school. All staff have been trained to implement the universal instruction of PBIS.

7. School Leadership:

Gaston is a school community that engages the strengths of the staff and encourages all staff to use their leadership skills to meet the mission and needs of the school and students. I, the school principal, provide opportunities for all staff to use their talents in various committees and teams that work to meet the needs of the school. Every staff member is encouraged to be a team member on at least one strategy of the strategic plan. The vertical teams work together to enhance the learning environment for students and staff. The ability of staff to work in collaborative communities allows for effective and open communication and fosters a positive inclusive environment. I hold everyone in the school community to high levels of accountability and active engagement. I encourage the successes of the individuals within my building and through their strengths we work together to make decisions that affect school policies and practice.

The school site level team is the governing body for Gaston. This team is comprised of staff members and parent representation and works jointly with the REACH team and PBIS team. With the advice of multiple teams the school curriculum, budget, and instructional strategies are planned and monitored.

I work to nurture the leaders within my building and allow them the opportunities to provide trainings and learning opportunities for everyone in the school community. Through the ongoing professional development related to positive behaviors and best practiced strategies leaders have utilized their roles to help make informed decisions for Gaston.

The PTA works jointly with the principal and school leadership teams to help provide additional activities to all students and families. Through the collaboration of the PTA, the staff parent engagement is monitored and encouraged.

As the school leader I feel one of my roles is to provide a welcoming environment for all students, staff, and parents. I am committed to educating others in supporting the school's educational philosophy. I remain focused on the goals for academic success and student performance by inspiring high expectations for staff, students, and parents.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: WKCE

Edition/Publication Year: 2009

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient plus Advanced	86	69	86	78	76
Advanced	29	11	17	22	29
Number of students tested	35	55	36	37	45
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	82	68	82	79	68
Advanced	23	12	14	26	24
Number of students tested	22	34	22	19	25
2. African American Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	91				
Advanced	18				
Number of students tested	11				
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient plus Advanced		31			
Advanced		8			
Number of students tested		13			
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11W18

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: WKCE

Edition/Publication Year: 2009

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient plus Advanced	97	76	89	92	87
Advanced	51	29	47	41	40
Number of students tested	35	55	36	37	45
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	100	79	86	95	80
Advanced	50	35	36	42	32
Number of students tested	22	34	22	19	25
2. African American Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	100				
Advanced	45				
Number of students tested	11				
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient plus Advanced		46			
Advanced		8			
Number of students tested		13			
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11W18

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: WKCE

Edition/Publication Year: 2009

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient plus Advanced	94	92	84	83	69
Advanced	44	33	39	28	25
Number of students tested	50	39	38	40	52
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	94	88	78	75	61
Advanced	44	25	43	29	19
Number of students tested	34	24	23	24	31
2. African American Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	70				
Advanced	0				
Number of students tested	10				
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11W18

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: WKCE

Edition/Publication Year: 2009

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient plus Advanced	92	77	90	88	85
Advanced	40	38	37	45	39
Number of students tested	50	39	38	40	52
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	88	63	91	88	84
Advanced	35	25	26	42	32
Number of students tested	34	24	23	24	31
2. African American Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	70				
Advanced	10				
Number of students tested	10				
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11W18

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: WKCE

Edition/Publication Year: 2009

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient plus Advanced	87	77	77	71	66
Advanced	51	28	28	27	14
Number of students tested	45	43	43	44	44
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	83	78	70	63	64
Advanced	47	26	22	22	11
Number of students tested	30	27	27	27	28
2. African American Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					66
Advanced					8
Number of students tested					12
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient plus Advanced		80			
Advanced		30			
Number of students tested		10			
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	77				
Advanced	46				
Number of students tested	13				
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11W18

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: WKCE

Edition/Publication Year: 2009

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient plus Advanced	91	86	95	82	82
Advanced	31	33	51	42	20
Number of students tested	45	43	43	44	44
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	87	85	93	78	79
Advanced	20	22	44	37	18
Number of students tested	30	27	27	27	28
2. African American Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					92
Advanced					17
Number of students tested					12
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient plus Advanced		70			
Advanced		30			
Number of students tested		10			
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	85				
Advanced	0				
Number of students tested	13				
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11W18

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient plus Advanced	89	78	82	77	70
Advanced	42	23	28	25	23
Number of students tested	130	137	117	121	141
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	87	77	76	71	64
Advanced	40	20	26	26	18
Number of students tested	86	85	72	70	84
2. African American Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	86	63	75	53	50
Advanced	33	11	17	7	7
Number of students tested	21	19	12	15	28
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	91	73	77	59	58
Advanced	27	18	35	29	17
Number of students tested	22	22	17	17	12
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	72	44	56	53	38
Advanced	24	4	11	6	12
Number of students tested	29	27	18	17	26
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	85	71	64	60	
Advanced	39	6	18	20	
Number of students tested	13	17	11	10	
6.					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11W18

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 0

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient plus Advanced	93	80	92	87	84
Advanced	40	33	45	43	33
Number of students tested	130	137	117	121	141
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	91	77	90	86	81
Advanced	34	28	36	40	27
Number of students tested	86	85	72	70	84
2. African American Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	95	79	100	80	71
Advanced	24	32	67	40	21
Number of students tested	21	19	12	15	28
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	91	68	88	88	92
Advanced	27	23	35	35	25
Number of students tested	22	22	17	17	12
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	83	41	61	47	50
Advanced	7	11	17	18	15
Number of students tested	29	27	18	17	26
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient plus Advanced	92	65	82	100	
Advanced	31	6	18	40	
Number of students tested	13	17	11	10	
6.					
Proficient plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

11W18